

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

OCTOBER 2003



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

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Unemployment rates decline in September

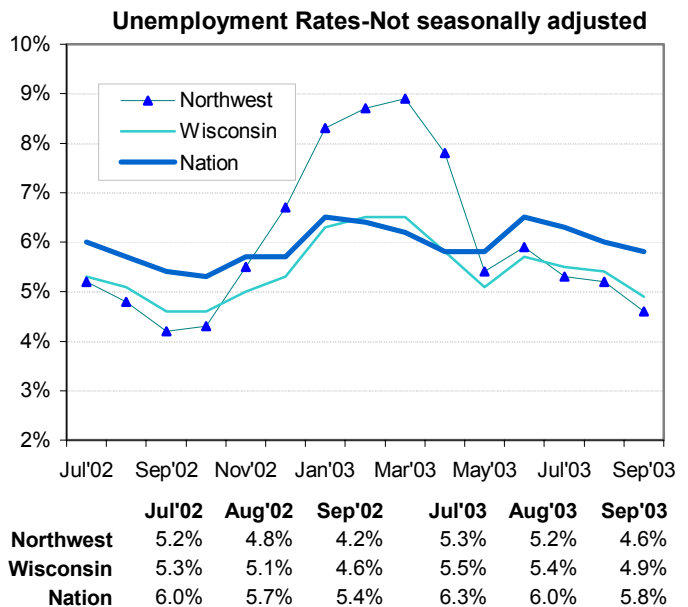
Unemployment rates in Northwest Wisconsin declined in September as they did in nearly every county in the state. According to estimates released by the Department of Workforce Development the unemployment rate in Northwest Wisconsin dropped to 4.6 percent in September, down from 5.2 percent in August. This followed a trend statewide where 70 of the 72 counties in the state posted lower unemployment rates in September. The State of Wisconsin unadjusted unemployment rate dropped from 5.4 percent in August to 4.9 percent in September.

While labor force estimates in nearly every county in the state indicate an improvement less unemployment during the month, the labor force compared with one year ago are less encouraging. Unemployment rates in all but 13 counties were higher this year than one year ago.

Burnett County was also one of only two in the state where the unemployment rate increased from August. In Burnett County the unemployment rate rose from 3.3 percent in August to 3.4 percent in September. Even with the increase Burnett still had the fifth lowest unemployment rate in the state.

The highest unemployment rate in the region, and eleventh highest in the state was in Iron County,

where the rate dropped from 6.6 percent in August to 5.9 percent in September. In Ashland County the rate declined from 6.9 to 5.6 percent; in Bayfield the rate dropped from 4.5 to 4.2 percent; and in Douglas the rate declined from 5.7 to 4.8 percent.



Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin counties: Current month - September 2003

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02
Civilian labor force	8,915	9,273	8,586	8,034	8,267	7,673	8,267	8,370	7,731	23,382	23,326	22,767	3,326	3,395	3,225
Employed	8,420	8,634	8,072	7,699	7,894	7,380	7,986	8,097	7,448	22,264	22,001	21,886	3,130	3,171	3,043
Unemployed	495	639	514	335	373	293	281	273	283	1,118	1,325	881	196	224	182
% unemployed	5.6	6.9	6.0	4.2	4.5	3.8	3.4	3.3	3.7	4.8	5.7	3.9	5.9	6.6	5.6
	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02
Civilian labor force	7,384	7,446	6,839	7,157	7,177	7,046	10,683	11,113	10,557	11,006	11,167	10,598	8,167	8,384	7,836
Employed	7,023	7,023	6,551	6,820	6,804	6,676	10,238	10,614	10,184	10,587	10,675	10,234	7,724	7,879	7,496
Unemployed	361	423	288	337	373	370	445	499	373	419	492	364	443	505	340
% unemployed	4.9	5.7	4.2	4.7	5.2	5.3	4.2	4.5	3.5	3.8	4.4	3.4	5.4	6.0	4.3

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - September 2003

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02
Total Nonfarm	9.2	9.2	9.2	4.5	4.7	4.2	5.4	5.4	5.1	18.7	18.1	18.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	1.1	1.2	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	0.4	0.4	0.4
Trade	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.7	3.2	3.2	3.2	0.3	0.3	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Financial Activities	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.9	1.9	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.6	1.2	0.7	0.8	0.6	2.4	2.6	2.3	0.3	0.4	0.3
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	3.4	3.4	3.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	2.2	2.1	2.2	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.3	3.1	2.3	3.3	0.3	0.3	0.4

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02	Sep '03	Aug '03	Sep '02
Total Nonfarm	6.8	6.8	6.5	6.1	6.0	6.0	7.2	7.5	7.4	9.3	9.3	9.1	6.0	6.1	6.0
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3
Manufacturing	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.1	2.1	2.1	0.6	0.6	0.5	2.8	2.8	2.8	1.0	1.0	1.1
Trade	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	0.9	0.9	0.9
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.8
Leisure & Hospitality	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.3	1.5	1.3	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.7
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total Government	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.3

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2002 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

The unemployment rate in Price County in September is 4.9 percent, down from 5.7 percent, in Rusk County the current rate of 4.7 percent is down from 5.2 percent, and in Sawyer the rate declined to 4.2 percent from 4.5 percent. The September unemployment rate in Taylor County of 3.8 percent is lower than the 4.4 percent unemployed in August, and in Washburn County the rate declined to 5.4 percent from 6.0 percent in August.

Unemployment rates typically decline in September, often to the lowest rates of the year. Unemployment drops as workers, primarily in education, return from summer break. In fact, without the increase in jobs in government in September there would have been fewer jobs in the region. Nearly every other industry sector reported a loss of jobs in September.

There were over 100 fewer manufacturing jobs in September, 100 fewer construction jobs and nearly 200 fewer trade jobs. The greatest reduction, over 800 jobs, occurred with leisure and hospitality employers. Every county in the region reported a loss of jobs in leisure and hospitality but the reductions were greater in Bayfield, Douglas, Sawyer, and Washburn counties. These are the same counties where the increase in government jobs did not compensate for the

loss of jobs from other industries and total employment declined during the month.

There were 75,500 nonfarm jobs in the ten-county region in September roughly the same as in August. Compared with one year ago, however, there are over 1,100. Most of those jobs were with leisure and hospitality employers. And, even though government added the most jobs in September, the total is the same as one year ago.

Manufacturing employment remains low in the area and nearly every county has reported some loss of production jobs. There were some indications earlier this summer that manufacturing employers were adding workers but those hopes faded as summer wore on. Next month there will be an increase in production jobs, but most of those jobs are with wreath producers and are temporary.

The number of residents filing claims for unemployment compensation benefits remains higher than in more recent years. In mid-September, 2,030 claims were filed for unemployment compensation compared with 1,910 in the same week in 2002. By mid-October the number of residents filing claims increases slightly.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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